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RURAL DRAMATICS IN OUR CLUB

A radio talk by Helen Rhyne, 4-H club girl, Gaston County, North Carolina, delivered in the National 4-H club radio program, August 24, 1934, and broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations.

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For the past several years one of the most extensive programs of the older group of 4-H club boys and girls of Gaston County, North Carolina, has been the development of recreational activities for the young and the old in the community. Through our county and State Agricultural Extension Service our county was able to secure the services of leaders from The National Recreation Association to conduct recreation and dramatic institutes.

At these institutes we learned how to play and direct three types of games: quiet games, active games, and rhythmic games. Music appreciation and singing were taught. We also learned the physical and cultural values of these activities. We studied the various phases of play production; directing, acting, stage make-up and stage management.

Using the club to which I belong as an example, I will attempt to give you a real picture of Rural dramatics and recreation in Gaston County. Immediately following our first institute, we older boys and girls organized a recreation and dramatic council or club. We meet once a month to practice old games and songs and to learn new ones. Then we go back to our representative 4-H clubs and conduct recreational activities throughout the county.

The members of the club who attended the training school conducted a three night institute for the younger members of our club. On the last night every one invited his parents and brought a picnic supper. After supper we invited our parents to join in the activities. Both young and old enjoyed an evening of real, clean, entertainment -- and it didn't cost anything.

Many different clubs and organizations have had us conduct evenings of recreation and fun in their communities. One would be surprised to see the large number of parents, and even grand parents who attend and take part in these activities -- and too, they seem to get as much pleasure out of this as we younger people. We feel that this type program has meant much to our people during these trying times when there was a shortage of money to provide the necessary things of life.

We are especially proud of the work that we have done with the younger 4-H club members. By conducting training schools for them, we have aroused the interest of every child in the community who is of club age. Naturally this has caused a large increase in membership throughout the county. As a result of our Dramatic and Recreation work we have a larger attendance at our meetings and the members take a keener interest in their projects and in their health, -- two other important phases of 4-H club work. Other phases of our work such as pageants at the crowning of our King and Queen of Health are impressive and far reaching.

Our group gives plays and encourages others to put on plays for themselves. Teaching that the actor in a play or dramatization enjoys his acting as much as does the audience. Recently we have given plays in our home

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community, in the county, before one of the civic clubs, and later at The State Short Course. Each year the outstanding county in dramatics is asked to stage a play in connection with the Short course program.

Several years ago one of our clubs gave a play at several different places in the county charging a small admission. In this way enough money was made to pay the expenses of the entire membership of the club to the State Short Course held at the State Agricultural College. Making money however, is not our objective. Providing wholesome fun and amusement for our rural people is what we are striving for and we believe that we have found fun for ourselves and others and we are glad that our 4-H clubs have been able to bring this wholesome recreation to our people at a time when it was needed most. Rural dramatics has meant much to the members of our club and community. It has taught us how to provide our own entertainment, how to work and play with others, and how to cooperate with our neighbors in building a greater community. Not only is it adding a touch of happiness to rural life, but it is also developing leadership among the rural boys and girls - one of the foremost aims of 4-H club work.

